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TAGS: [UNGA](#) [UNGA](#) [SENV](#) [EAID](#) [AORC](#)
SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS: U.S. RESPONSE ON PROPOSED RIO+20
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

REF: A. USUN NY 902
[B](#). USUN 928
[C](#). USUN NY 978

[1](#). Summary. South Korea's Ambassador Park has approached Ambassador Khalilzad and Ambassador McMahan (reftels A and C) about Korea's interest in hosting a Rio-plus-20 (Rio 20) conference on sustainable development in Korea in 2012. He reiterated that it is the right time for Asia to host such a stock-taking conference and said that the G-77 was pushing for such an event. He requested the U.S. position on such as summit. End Summary.

[2](#). Additional Background:

Brazilian President Lula and South Korean PM Han have each proposed hosting a "Rio 20" Sustainable Development Summit in 2012 to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development ("Rio Earth Summit") and 10th anniversary of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Brazil intends to table a General Assembly resolution in early November calling for such a Summit; it is not clear at this stage whether ROK intends to do the same, but has suggested the need for one. Both governments have demarched USUN Ambassador Khalilzad to press their case (reftels). A timeline of sustainable development conferences is:

- 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm
- 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development ("Rio Earth Summit")
- 1997 "Rio 5" - New York
- 2000 Millennium Summit
- 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg
- GOK and Brazil have proposed a 2012 Rio-plus-20 Conference
- CSD agreed in 2003 to a 2016/2017 "Overall appraisal of implementation" of Rio, Johannesburg outcomes in the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

[3](#). Additional Background Continued:

If convened, Rio 20, would be the third Rio follow-up conference, after Rio 5 in 1997 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. In 2003, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the body charged with ensuring effective follow-up of the 1992 and 2002 Summits, agreed by consensus to postpone any comprehensive review of the outcomes of these Summits until 2016/2017. The CSD work cycle reflects this agreement by covering various aspects of sustainable development, in series, through 2017:

- 2004/2005: water, sanitation, human settlements
- 2006/2007: energy, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, climate change
- 2008/2009: agriculture, rural development, drought, desertification, Africa
- 2010/2011: transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, sustainable consumption and production
- 2012/2013: forests, biodiversity, biotechnology, tourism, mountains
- 2014/2014: oceans and seas, marine resources, small island

developing states, disaster management and vulnerability
-- 2016/2017: overall appraisal of implementation of Agenda 21, the Program of Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Program of Implementation.

¶4. Post is requested to respond to Ambassador Park by reiterating the message given in the U.S. 2nd Committee Statement on Sustainable Development, delivered on October 27, 2008 (text in paragraph 5). USUN should emphasize that the U.S. is not opposed to the Summit per se, but we are concerned about the resources, both financial and human, that would be required, and we have questions pertaining to whether a summit would be productive at this stage, in light of our ongoing sustainable development commitments. USUN should also emphasize that the role of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and its cycle of work, internationally agreed in 2003, are important priorities for the U.S. We also have questions about the process leading up to any summit and how that would influence or change the CSD work cycle. Internal discussions continue on the U.S. position on a Rio 20, but the initial thought is that a summit in 2012 may be premature and may detract from ongoing programs of work.

¶5. Begin U.S. statement text related to "Rio 20":
We understand that there has been some discussion of a possible "Rio 20" Summit. We welcome both continued work on sustainable development and discussion on this particular topic. However, given the success of the CSD, and in light of its schedule of cycles, we should closely examine the necessity of a summit. We already have a large number of agreements governing our ongoing efforts on sustainable development, as well as commitments still in progress. Another summit could detract valuable attention from our ongoing efforts to fulfill commitments and implement Agenda 21, with limited additional benefits, if any. Such a summit would disrupt the CSD cycle of work linked to Agenda 21 that ends in 2017. Also, we question whether a "Rio 20" is the best use of limited financial and human resources in the current economic climate. Above all, we advocate continuing progress towards existing commitments and spending resources on actions that directly produce results.
End statement text.
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